

**(BP)****-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 4, 1982

82-69

Blind Considered Inferior,  
Incompetent, Professor Says

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Most Southern Baptists consider blind people socially inferior, professionally incompetent and personally incapable, a blind Baptist college professor charged during a national conference on blind ministry.

Charles Melton, professor of Bible and religious education at Clarke College, Newton, Miss., told about 85 participants in the conference, sponsored by the SBC Home Mission and Sunday School boards, that such views are distorted and there must be a change of attitude before blind ministries can be effective.

Melton insisted he spoke not as a caustic critic but as a concerned Christian who for 40 years has waited for Southern Baptists to develop blind ministries.

"It is common practice for Southern Baptist pastors, lay persons and denominational leaders to consider blind persons their inferiors and therefore unworthy for consideration for employment in church and denominational staff positions," Melton said.

A recent survey, he said, disclosed only five blind persons employed by Baptist state and national agencies---two college professors, one state convention consultant, and two stenographers for the Sunday School and Home Mission Boards. Since then, the blind secretary at the Home Mission Board has resigned but the board has commissioned a blind hospital chaplain.

Among local churches, so many Baptists feel blind persons are socially inferior that they fail to win blind persons to salvation in Jesus Christ, Melton said. Even those blind who do accept Christ are seldom accepted into full participation in the congregation, he added.

Because of the attitudes of sighted Baptists toward them, few blind people show interest in spiritual matters or being members of the church, Melton observed.

In another address, Berthold Lowenfeld, a leading authority on blind ministries and retired superintendent of the California School for the Blind, traced the history of attitudes toward the blind from prehistoric times to modern civilization.

"Loss of sight has always been considered the most tragic and disabling affliction next to death itself," Lowenfeld said.

"Most sighted people perceive blind as helpless and miserable, and show pity and oversolicitude toward people they consider inferior."

Lowenfeld said other common attitudes include fear of becoming involved with blind persons and guilt because they wonder, "Why is he blind and not I?"

In a second address, Melton called for Baptists to develop a theology for ministry to more than 600,000 totally blind persons in the United States and 5.8 million legally and functionally blind Americans.

"Blind ministry is absolutely, theologically sound and mandated," Melton said. "It is both implicit and explicit in the Bible, for Jesus demonstrated blind ministry personally," Melton said.

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The motive for such ministry must be Christ's love for and acceptance of all people, Melton added, and must not be condescending, paternalizing or patronizing.

Melton said Baptists are in a dilemma, because blind ministries cannot be developed without education materials, and there is no need or market for such materials until churches change attitudes and request the materials.

Oscar Hussel, dean of Columbia Presbyterian Seminary, Atlanta, suggested three simple steps in becoming a change agent: unfreeze current attitudes, plan, and refreeze.

He warned participants to expect apathy and resistance, but cautioned against giving in to it. He urged them to believe in the rightness of their mission, and stressed trying to find agreement on ends rather than means or methods.

During a closing open summary, Morton Rose, vice president of church programs and services for the Sunday School Board, pledged concerted board efforts to develop needed training materials in printed, braille and audio cassettes for blind ministries, and to make them available to churches as well as blind persons.

Cecil Etheredge, national blind ministries consultant for the SBC Home Mission Board, announced the board will produce a new blind ministries manual for SBC churches in October to coincide with new Sunday School Board materials.

In this meeting, the first national conference of its kind, "We have sought to give high visibility to ability" of blind persons, Etheredge said. Of the 11 speakers and musicians on the program, seven were blind.

While Etheredge decried the attitude of sighted persons toward the blind, comparing such attitudes to those of whites toward blacks in the early 1950s and 1960s, he pointed out the program was held to allow blind Baptists to express their feelings toward Baptist leaders who for too long have dragged their feet in developing effective blind ministries.

"You have said volumes to us," Etheredge said. But he also urged blind Baptists to "leave behind their own attitudes toward the sighted which are negative and destructive. We must work together if we are to be effective."

In addition to the two major addresses by Melton, other blind speakers included Jay Waugh, president of the Jay Waugh Evangelistic Association and field consultant for North Carolina Baptists; Logan Carson, professor at Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C.; Edwin Wilson, executive director of Christian Education for the blind, Fort Worth, Texas; and Mrs. Alvin Wynn, former school teacher, Jacksonville, Fla.

Blind musicians on the program were Ann Martin, soprano soloist for First Baptist Church, Atlanta; and Gene Cole, accordian soloist and Sunday School Board word processing transcriptionist.

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Baptist Men's Fellowship  
Breakfast Set for SBC

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Baptist Press  
5/4/82

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission will host a Baptist Men's Fellowship breakfast June 16, prior to the morning session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

More than 200 men are expected to attend the breakfast which begins at 7 a.m. at Gentilly Baptist Church, 5141 Franklin St. Testimonies from active Baptist Men, inspiration and recognitions are planned for the breakfast.

Royal Ambassadors who have earned the National Service Award will be individually recognized. The Service Award represents at least 750 hours of service performed in ministry and worship projects.

Jameson to Southwestern,  
To Direct News Services

CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Norman Jameson, Baptist Press feature editor since 1977, will become assistant director of news and information services at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, effective July 1.

Jameson, 29, will coordinate all news and information services at Southwestern. The newly created position is in the office of public affairs, directed by John E. Seelig.

Jameson, a Wisconsin native, came to Baptist Press from Colorado Springs, Colo., where he was religion editor of the Gazette-Telegraph. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University.

He has won awards in Baptist Public Relations Association and Religious Public Relations Council writing competitions. His coverage of the damage left by Hurricanes David and Frederick in the Caribbean in 1979 won five awards.

"Norman Jameson has done outstanding work as feature editor of Baptist Press," said Wilmer C. Fields, director of the news service. "We commend him for wanting to add theological education to his training and experience in journalism. This new post will allow him to be a student, as well as a professional staff member, for Southwestern Seminary."

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Court Limits Cities' Power  
Over Church Fund-Raising

By Stan Hasteley

WB

Baptist Press  
5/4/82

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BP)—City officials may not decide which church activities are spiritual and which are secular in regulating solicitation of funds, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled.

The 7-2 court action affirming two lower federal courts, struck down an Albuquerque, N. M., ordinance empowering city officials to forbid charitable solicitation unless numerous requirements were met.

Among other provisions, the Albuquerque law set up a solicitations review board to issue permits after it determined if the cost of solicitation would exceed 30 percent of the gross amount to be raised, if advertising material and promotional plans were false, misleading or deceptive, and if the organization or its officers had been convicted of a crime involving charitable solicitation within the past 10 years.

Exempted were solicitations by religious organizations when the review board determined that they were "solely for evangelical, missionary, or religious but not secular purposes."

Attorneys for the city asked the Supreme Court to review the lower decisions, arguing that the ordinance was to prevent fraudulent solicitation.

The Albuquerque ordinance was challenged in December 1978 by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which conducts an annual "ingathering" program that includes door-to-door solicitation. Funds collected are used, according to the church, for a variety of ministries, including food, shelter and clothing for the poor, summer youth camps for the disadvantaged, and counseling, health and educational services.

In asking the Supreme Court to affirm the lower panels, church attorneys argued the Adventists consider its solicitation program "a form of evangelism." The door-to-door canvass, they insisted, involves church outreach as well as financial solicitation. Both the "ingathering" program and welfare ministries constitute part of the church's "religious mission" and "biblical duty," they wrote.

They concluded that Albuquerque not only failed to show a "compelling governmental interest" for its ordinance but "treads upon dangerous grounds when it attempts to determine that an historic church activity is secular and not religious."

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'Grass Roots Interest' Brought  
Fast Action on Low-Power TV

CO

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Enormous grass roots support for low-power television accounted for speedy approval of the new broadcast service by the Federal Communications Commission, according to an FCC official.

Molly Pauker, attorney for the FCC's Broadcast Bureau, told participants in the National Conference on Broadcast Ministries in Fort Worth that public reaction to the idea, which produced more than 6,500 applications for new stations, indicates low-power "will serve the public."

Pauker said the FCC's approval of low-power, a year-and-a-half after proposing the service, "was quite radical in the communications world." Although it seemed like a long ordeal to LPTV applicants, she said, it was unusually swift for governmental processes.

Low-power television is the first new broadcast service authorized by the Federal Communications Commission in 25 years. Pauker said the FCC's proposal for low-power presented problems it had not anticipated, including an unexpectedly high number of people seeking licenses.

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Area Director Leaves  
for Argentina Visit

RB

Baptist Press  
5/4/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Thurmon Bryant, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director for eastern South America, moved his scheduled Argentina visit to begin May 6 to give support to missionaries in the current crisis.

Bryant has been communicating almost daily with missionary leaders in Argentina and thus far said missionaries have experienced no direct expressions of hostility. But he said he advanced his visit by a week to "give whatever support and encouragement I can to the missionaries."

After several days in Buenos Aires he hopes to visit some of the other cities where missionaries and Argentine Baptists have work. He also will attend the meeting of the Argentine Evangelical Baptist Convention, still scheduled to meet May 21-25 in Rosario.

Fifty-four of the 60 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Argentina are on the field. The Argentine convention has 27,000 members in 476 churches and mission points. The first Baptist work began there in 1881, and the first Southern Baptist missionaries arrived in 1903.

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Doug Day Named  
VTS Coordinator

CO

Baptist Press  
5/4/82

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)-- Douglas D. Day, minister of education and administration at First Baptist Church, Starkville, Miss., will become the first coordinator of the Southern Baptist Video Tape Service, effective June 8.

VTS is a convention-wide project to produce teaching, training and informational materials on video tape for distribution to churches, associations and state conventions.

Day, 32, will be employed by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Video Tape Service, which administers the project.

He will base his work at the Radio-Television Commission where the tapes are being produced.

Day will assist the Ad Hoc Committee in production and planning, develop promotional plans for VTS and be liaison for the RTVC, agencies and participating state conventions.

A native of Memphis, Tenn., Day is a graduate of Mississippi State University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married and has two children.

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Baptists Have Cool  
Place for Hot Seat

By Norman Jameson

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)-- The 248 air conditioned seats in Baptist Pavillion at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville will spell welcome relief for scorched visitors to the world's largest steam cooker.

Officials of the fair, which opened with 87,659 visitors May 1, expect 13 million guests before the close Oct. 31. When southern sun parches the 72 acres of asphalt this summer, fair goers will gladly plant their bermudas in any air conditioned plot for brief relief.

Southern Baptists will provide the opportunity to lower body temperature for a chance to raise spiritual temperment with a rousing live musical presentation of the gospel.

"Love, You Spoke a Word," written by Ken Medema, premiered April 29 in the packed Knoxville Civic Auditorium. The audience, mostly local Baptists with a healthy sprinkling of Baptist journalists in town to cover the fair's opening, received the initial performance enthusiastically.

A nation-wide talent search produced 16 college young people, now a trained team called PowerSource, that will perform the musical six to eight times daily in the Baptist Pavillion in the very heart of the fair.

Using parody and humor, the musical drama tells the biblical story of creation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and the role of Christians in the world today.

The production, sure to become popular in Southern Baptist churches, has four parts, all with lively tunes and striking, powerful lyrics. The words are as modern as warnings of "nuclear thunder," as ancient as the refrain "Death, where is your victory?"

"I think we'll capture this whole place," said David Peach, executive director of Baptist Ministries for the World's Fair. "The word's going to get out."

Preceding the performances of PowerSource will be a powerful slide-sound presentation "The Word Is...Energy." Primarily written and produced by Wayne Grinstead of the Baptist Home Mission Board, the production, using 16 slide projectors, moves quickly from man's worship of energy, such as lightening and fire, to the Christian's responsible use of energy.

In touch with the fair's energy theme, the production, which won its category in the recent Baptist Public Relations awards competiton, asks penetrating questions through a feast of sight and sound: Will man so control pollution that it is priced out of the range of the poor? Will we lower the safety factors now required on nuclear power production and threaten ourselves with the resultant dangers? Do we have the right to displace ancient traditions in our search for energy?

Eventually, we must go beyond energy to faith and the one who created spiritual energy, the film says. "Jesus came to point us to the source...GOD."

Peach said 145 church, college and BSU choirs are scheduled between performances of PowerSource and the media presentation.

With 23 international exhibits, this fair is the largest sanctioned world's fair in the United States in more than 40 years. The exhibits by China, Peru and Egypt are most outstanding because of their ancient and artistic excellence.

Those pavillions where native artists work and perform are most popular and do the best job of explaining their culture to the visitors. Many exhibits are simply air conditioned halls through which visitors walk, reading displays and graphs about what that nation is doing in the field of energy.

Because live performances and cool seats are popular, Peach and other Baptist officials who attended opening day festivities are exited about the outreach offered through the Baptist Pavillion, the only pavillion at the fair sponsored by a single religious group.

Strolling clowns and puppet teams in wagons will tour the grounds to attract visitors to the pavillion, already centrally located.

A Christian flag adorns the pavillion roof, visible from the Sunsphere, the outstanding structural feature at the fair. The flag was shown on national television during opening festivities and television commentators identified the International Court of Flags where Reagan and dignitaries spoke, as "next to the Baptist Pavillion."

A carillon, with a large clock, SBC logo and cross at the top, was erected in the waning hours before opening day. It will chime the hour, and play hymns during the day. The Baptist carillon closed opening day festivities with a hymn and chimes.

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Churches Told To Make Room  
For TV In Worship Service

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press  
5/4/82

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Presbyterian minister Ben Haden told Southern Baptist media workers that churches should accept the intrusion of television into their worship services because without it they cannot reach their communities.

"If you believe in home and foreign missions, you've got to believe in television," he said.

Haden, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., was keynote speaker for the second National Conference on Broadcast Ministries. The April 26-28 meeting drew more than 400 participants and was sponsored jointly by the Radio and Television Commission (RTVC) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Workshops were conducted in several interest areas to train pastors, media ministers and others in use of radio, TV and cable. Participants also observed an actual videotaping of a television special for the American Christian Television System featuring comedian Jerry Clower and The Centurymen choral group.

Haden has hosted a national weekly radio program since 1967 and his Chattanooga church has been on television 11 years, four of them nationally. He said that exposure has multiplied his church's ministry.

"Every year we present the gospel to more individuals than the church did from its formation in 1839 to 1967 . . . and maybe every week," he explained. "That's only possible because of television."

Haden said because many people will not go to church, they are beyond the traditional ministry of the local congregation.

"The idea you can transfer the church (service) to television is tommyrot," the former newspaper editor declared. "Television is an entertainment and information medium. If you are not going to entertain in any way, don't go on television. They did not buy a television to go to church.

"You conform to the medium or the audience tunes out, and the opportunity God gave you is gone."

Haden said the major opposition churches face when they consider a TV ministry is that it interferes with the worship service. But, citing testimonies from his own ministry, he said the results in changed lives are worth the cost.

"Did you ever do anything for the glory of God when there was no benefit in it for you? That's what you are doing when you go into television."

Haden challenged churches that use TV in ministry to communicate their message clearly, avoiding theological, intellectual and denominational complications.

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"The discipline of television is simplicity," he explained. "That is also the discipline of Jesus. It is to communicate, not to confuse. If anything is seen and heard and not understood, it is better left unsaid."

"Television is not a denominational medium," he said, noting that 90 percent of the viewers who write in response to his program are not Presbyterian.

Citing a survey that indicated ministers are more in tune with the public than any other profession, Haden told those going into TV ministries to be pastors, "not TV preachers."

"Be a pastor, so when you speak of hurt, you know whereof you speak," he said.

Haden called Southern Baptists "the most blessed of all denominations" and attributed their success to insistence on public invitations for commitments. He added, "I don't believe any other denomination will pull off a network like ACTS (American Christian Television System)."

Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, disagreed with Haden on the need for churches to adapt to the TV camera.

Jackson said his North Phoenix church, which telecasts regularly both in the Phoenix area and over the PTL network, resisted the advice to change its worship service to fit television and to be profitable. "I refuse to do that. I am a local church pastor."

"You build your church as if you were not on television," Jackson instructed, "and let your television ministry be an extension of that."

He reported one-third of all additions to North Phoenix have initial contact with the church through its TV ministry.

Jackson said Baptists should make their mark in the electronic media doing what they do best--preaching.

"Preach the gospel, turn the cameras on and share that with the audience," he admonished. "If you do that, the worship service will always have a place in the media."

Molly Pauker, the FCC attorney who drafted the rules governing low-power television, described those rules to the conference. She said the FCC's approval of low-power, a year-and-a-half after proposing the new service, "was quite radical in the communications world." Although it seemed like a long ordeal to LPTV applicants, she said, it was unusually swift for governmental processes.

Pauker attributed the speedy approval of low-power, the first new broadcast service in 25 years, to enormous grass roots support for the idea. More than 6,500 LPTV applications were filed with the FCC in a matter of months.

An update on the Center for Christian Communications Studies at Southwestern Seminary was offered by center director Darrel Baergen. The graduate training program, a joint effort of the seminary and the RTVC, soon may be accredited, he said.

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Baptist Men's Fellowship  
Breakfast Set for SBC

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Baptist Press  
5/3/82

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Baptist Pavillion Opens  
Amid Pomp at World's Fair

By Jim Newton

AB

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Following a three-hour opening ceremony filled with pomp, pageantry and a dedication by President Ronald Reagan, the Southern Baptist Pavillion opened at the 1982 World's Fair within a few hundred feet of the Court of Flags from where the president spoke.

Almost 90,000 people attended opening day at the fair, fewer than expected, and more than 870 visited the Baptist Pavillion.

A capacity crowd of almost 250 jammed the Baptist Pavillion when it opened one hour after Reagan's speech to watch a musical drama by an octet called PowerSource and a multi-image media presentation by Wayne Grinstead of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Visitors leaving the Baptist Pavillion walked past an exhibit showing a first edition Gutenberg Bible housed in a huge walnut Bible display case built for the 1873 World's Fair in New Orleans. The Bible display case is on loan from the Baptist Sunday School Board and Philadelphia Museum of Art, and is valued at \$50,000.

"It's powerful," one Georgia woman said with tears in her eyes as she left the Baptist pavilion after watching the opening performance. "It made me proud to be a Baptist, and proud Baptists have a pavillion at the fair."

Southern Baptists are the only religious group with their own pavillion at the fair, and perhaps the only denomination ever to have their own pavillion at any world's fair, said David Peach, executive director of Baptist Ministries at the 1982 World's Fair.

Peach said Baptists are fortunate to have one of the best possible sites for the pavillion, located in a peak traffic pattern on the 72-acre fairgrounds in downtown Knoxville.

There are three other religious exhibits at the fair, all in the Technology and Lifestyle Building, across "Waters of the World" lake from the Baptist Pavillion and Court of Flags.

Both Seventh Day Adventists and the Church of Christ, worldwide, have their own exhibits.

Seventh Day Adventist's exhibit, "People Helping People," features a computerized health analysis.

The most expensive and posh religious exhibit is sponsored by the Church of Christ, worldwide. Operating on a budget of \$900,000, the exhibit carries out the theme, "Energy for Life—God's Love, Person to Person." It features walk-through displays of Church of Christ ministries, a computerized Bible quiz, videotape presentations, and a 1611 King James Bible displayed in a triangular plexiglass case. The only two-level exhibit in the Technology and Lifestyle Building, it provides offices for private counseling on the upper level.

Described as a "multi-sensory experience," the exhibit by a coalition of 16 denominations called "the Church's Presence at the World's Fair" is the most technologically-sophisticated and mindboggling of the religious exhibits.

Operating on a budget of \$830,000 but valued at \$1.25 million because of donated talent, equipment and facilities, the Church's Presence exhibit uses almost every conceivable electronic and sensory media.

Visitors sit in a pitch-black room and watch with wonder as creation unfolds around them electronically, then move to a second room with a carnival decor where they watch six television screens and multiple image projections tell of man's futile search for meaning in life, and then follow a transparency projection of Christ into a third room where they see what the church is doing in the world today.

"It is tremendously moving and stirring," said Harold Bales, executive director of the project and an official of the United Methodist Church.

The Church's Presence exhibit is sponsored by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the AME Zion Church, the Christian Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of the Bretheren, Church of God (both Cleveland and Mountain Assembly groups), Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Episcopal Church, Greek Orthodox Church, National Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church in the U.S, Roman Catholic Church, United Methodist Church and United Presbyterians.

The Church's Presence exhibit did not open on the first day of the fair, partially because one of their key electronics experts was arrested by security officials when they discovered a pistol in his suitcase.

Larry Day of Dallas, jailed for several hours in the morning of President Reagan's visit, had taken a taxi to the fair with his luggage, planning to leave that afternoon. He told police he had taken the pistol on a hunting-fishing trip before coming to Knoxville and had forgotten it was in his luggage.

A report in the Knoxville News-Sentinel incorrectly identified Day as an employee of the Baptist Pavillion, but the writer said his newspaper would carry a correction.

Most of exhibits opened as planned, although Panama canceled their exhibit at the last minute and others experienced numerous problems. Baptists were not exempt.

The carillon at the Baptist Pavillion began pealing in the middle of the grand finale of the opening ceremonies while the choirs were singing because the director of the pageant signaled the carillon operator by walkie-talkie to start the chimes. Later, when the multi-image media presentation was shown for the first time in the Baptist Pavillion, one of the 16 slide projectors was turned off and the show had to be started again.

Southern Baptists are still about \$75,000 short of their \$450,000 budget for the Baptist Pavillion (half the cost of two other religious exhibits), but Peach believes the remainder can be raised before the end of the fair through personal contributions and ticket sales.

Baptist ministries has cleared about \$40,000 on the sale of tickets to the fair, but Peach had expected earlier ticket orders from Baptists planning to attend. Following one of the performances by PowerSource, an unidentified man from California shook hands with performer Edna Alvarez of Whittier, Calif., and gave her a \$100 bill. "This is to help you in your ministry," the man told her. "I believe in what you are doing."

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(BP) photos mailed to Baptist state newspapers by Atlanta, Nashville and Sunday School Board bureaus of Baptist Press

CORRECTION: In BP story mailed 5/3/82, beginning at the top of page 5 with the words "Creation of the new assignment," please add headline and first paragraph as follows: Foreign Mission Board Names/First Agriculture Liaison RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has named James Philpot, Southern Baptist representative to Mexico, as its first furlough missionary liaison for agriculture missions. Thanks Baptist Press